

Regular Session, 2010

HOUSE CONCURRENT RESOLUTION NO. 179

BY REPRESENTATIVE AUSTIN BADON

A CONCURRENT RESOLUTION

To urge and request the Department of Social Services and the state Department of Education to work collaboratively to ensure that children enter kindergarten ready to learn, to establish and maintain an infrastructure for the coordination of data, and to submit by March first annually a school readiness report to the governor, the House Committee on Education, the Senate Committee on Education, and the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

WHEREAS, research has demonstrated that investments in high-quality early learning programs set the stage for long-term positive outcomes for children, reduce the need for special education services, increase high school graduation rates, reduce incarceration rates, and increase self-sufficiency; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana has developed a nationally recognized pre-kindergarten program known as LA-4, which serves approximately sixteen thousand students in the six-hour instructional program and one thousand seven hundred students in the before- and after-school enrichment program in sixty-five school districts and fifteen charter schools throughout the state; and

WHEREAS, Louisiana was the fifteenth state in the nation to implement a Quality Rating and Improvement System (Quality Start) for child care centers; more than half of the state's licensed child care centers voluntarily participated within the first two years, with a capacity of one hundred forty-one thousand three hundred thirty-seven children; and

WHEREAS, the federal Administration for Children and Families has established Head Start and Early Head Start programs throughout the state, providing a comprehensive approach to child development for the twenty-two thousand eight hundred seventy-six currently enrolled children; and

WHEREAS, "ensuring all Louisiana children enter kindergarten ready to learn" is a common goal of the Department of Social Services and the state Department of Education; and

WHEREAS, school readiness does not begin in kindergarten, but prenatally, with the most critical brain development occurring between birth and the age of three; and

WHEREAS, there is consensus based on research that a child's readiness for school should reflect the following five distinct but connected domains: physical well-being and motor development, social and emotional development, cognitive development, language development, and approaches to learning.

THEREFORE, BE IT RESOLVED that the Legislature of Louisiana does hereby urge and request the Department of Social Services and the state Department of Education to work collaboratively to provide for the following in the effort to ensure that children enter kindergarten ready to learn:

- (1) The development of a statewide definition of school readiness.
- (2) The establishment of the departments' respective reporting requirements and time frames.
- (3) The establishment of the respective roles and responsibilities of each department.
- (4) The development of a framework to integrate data and measure program outcomes.
- (5) The establishment of methods to assess the use of resources currently being invested in child development and early learning so as to reduce duplication among programs.
- (6) The development of an integrated professional development system for the early learning workforce.
- (7) The integration of family literacy services into the early learning system.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the legislature does hereby urge and request the Department of Social Services and the state Department of Education to establish and maintain an infrastructure for the coordination of department data regarding the state's school readiness and early learning efforts.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that the legislature does hereby urge and request the Department of Social Services and the state Department of Education annually to submit,

by March first, a school readiness report to the governor, the House Committee on Education, the Senate Committee on Education, and the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education detailing the current status of children's readiness for school and the coordinated continuous quality improvement efforts of the respective departments.

BE IT FURTHER RESOLVED that a copy of this Resolution be transmitted to the secretary of the Department of Social Services, to the state superintendent of education, and to the president of the State Board of Elementary and Secondary Education.

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SPEAKER OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES

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PRESIDENT OF THE SENATE